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GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Accident Prevention Series No. 2

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in the public service of Canada."



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INTRODUCTION

An accident is an unexpected event being caused by one of two things, an *unsafe act* of a person or an *unsafe physical condition*, or, perhaps, a combination of both. Accident prevention is the foreseeing of the cause and taking definite steps to eliminate it. Prevent the accident and there will be no injury.

HOUSEKEEPING

Every year there is a large toll of accidents reported that have a common factor. That common factor is poor housekeeping. Some of these prove costly and painful while others, fortunately, are of a minor nature. Most of these accidents could have been prevented had the housekeeping been of a higher standard in the establishments where the accidents occurred.

Good housekeeping is one of the most important factors in accident prevention and as long as workers continue to trip over loose objects and slip on oily and greasy floors and stairways, or to be hit by falling objects the problem has not been solved. There is more to industrial housekeeping than accident prevention; there is fire prevention, the control of diseases, the conserving of time and space and there is also the improvement of employee morale.

Industrial housekeeping has often been expressed as "a place for everything and everything in its place".

A work place is a place of business and for producing things and therefore, cannot be expected to look like a barrack-room on inspection day. It can, however, be neat and tidy.

A spasmodic house cleaning drive that starts off with a bang, only to slow down or stop entirely, then flare up again at a later date is of little or no value. Housekeeping depends on the day to day neatness of all employees.

Regular housekeeping inspections should be made and these inspections can perhaps best be made by members of the safety committee together with a representative, charged with authority, from administration.

Good housekeeping reflects good organization and where you have orderliness coupled with organization you are bound to have fewer accidents.

The more important items or methods of good housekeeping can be grouped under the following headings:

AISLES AND PASSAGEWAYS

Aisles and passageways should be well defined and of sufficient width to permit double lanes of traffic. The width is governed by the location and amount of traffic that will be borne.

Materials should not be permitted to project into the aisles nor should the aisles be used for storage purposes either temporary or permanent.

Aisles and passageways should be so constructed or arranged that they will provide the shortest and easiest means of going through the establishment thus reducing the temptation for the workers to take short cuts near moving machinery.

ELEVATORS

Proper operation and maintenance of elevator equipment are essential in good housekeeping programs. They should not be used for storage purposes and the floor should be kept free of all debris.

Elevators should be equipped with interlocking devices which will prevent them from operating while the gates are open.

FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

An adequate supply of fire extinguishers should be provided and they should be installed in carefully selected, easily accessible places.

The construction, purpose and method of operation of each type of extinguisher should be taught by explanation and discussion and by permitting employees to handle the equipment.

Fire hoses should be inspected frequently. The frequency of fire drills will be determined by the physical condition of the establishment and surroundings.

Fire fighting equipment should never be blocked off or hidden by stored materials.

FLOORING

Floors should be constructed of materials that have been considered from a safety standpoint in the erection of new buildings or in the repairing of old. They should be kept free from holes and obstructions especially where the floors form part of aisles or walking places.

Oil, grease, chips and other compounds which could be the cause of slipping or falling accidents should be promptly removed. Scraps of metal, nails, tools and other working materials should be picked up and the floors kept free of all litter.

In areas, where wet processes are carried on, floors should be given special consideration for proper grading and drainage. Rough paint or safety non-slip cleats are particularly useful in such areas in eliminating slipping hazards.

LIGHTING

Poorly illuminated establishments are breeding places for indifferent housekeeping. All places of work including work benches, aisles, passageways and stairways should be suitably lighted and free from shadows.

All unnecessary hangings on walls should be removed and the walls kept clean and freshly painted with a light coloured and highly reflective paint.

Windows should be kept clean with a regular schedule of washing so that natural light will be used to its best advantage.

SANITATION

Sanitation is a natural companion of Safety and Good Housekeeping.

Many establishments now provide shower rooms in addition to locker and wash-rooms but whatever the accommodation that is provided for the employees it must be kept clean and orderly. Lockers should be ventilated and the workers cautioned against storing oily clothing or waste material in them.

Properly covered receptacles should be provided for refuse and for milk and soft drink bottles.

STAIRWAYS

Stairways should be kept clear of all materials and should be well lighted.

As tripping and falling accidents are more likely to happen in these locations than on level surfaces hand rails should be constructed. The addition of non-slip materials to the treads is also helpful in preventing accidents.

STORAGE

The improper piling and storage of materials is a major cause of poor housekeeping. Each pile should have a good foundation and where possible the piles should be cross tied.

Piles of materials should be located in such a way that they do not form tripping hazards. Piles should allow sufficient clearance between the top level and the sprinkler and light systems.

Tools and equipment should be returned to stores or place of storage and not left lying around when they have served their purpose.

Bulky materials are usually provided with areas in the yard for storage. These piles should be kept trimmed at all times. Small articles can be shelved in bins and cribs.

Such materials as oils, grease, acids and toxic substances should be handled and stored only under established procedures and all spillage cleaned up immediately.

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